

Parshat Matot-Masei

Shabbat, 26 Tammuz, 5786 July 11, 2026

Haskamah Parsha Class

Lessons learned from Biblical successions
Priests, Prophets, & Kings/Leaders



for

Dedicated in memory of Golda Seva Rosen on her 26th Yahrtzeit

Nathan Aaron Rosen

- Thank you to Rabbi Doctor Moshe Sokolow for his many decades of teaching us in the Haskamah Minyan parsha class and his sharing his teaching methodology and technique.
- Thank you to Rabbi Chaim Brovender for his opening up Jewish learning to me starting with the year at Yeshivat HaMivtar and continuing in recent decades with his weekly parshah, and Talmud classes and the many classes at his creation, WebYeshiva.

What we are not going to talk about

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob and their challenges with their sons regarding successful and unsuccessful passing of their mantle.

Also not talking about whether Pinchas who seemed to be likely going to be the next priest after Aaron instead of Eleazar was not selected. Pinchas was son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron which gave him hereditary priesthood. He was by G-d granted priesthood (Numbers 25:13) last week (It shall be for him and his descendants after him a pact of priesthood for all time, because he took impassioned action for his G-d, thus making expiation for the Israelites.) Last week, Daniel Besdin mentioned this and the Talmud's treatment alluding to Sanhedrim 82b. Talmud Zevachim 101b suggests that Pinchas was actually not a Priest as he was not anointed as having been born before Aaron and sons were given the priesthood in Exodus 28:41 and only got it after he killed Zimri which Rashi brings down in commenting on verse 13.

Who are we going to talk about

Priests

Aaron and Eleazar, Nadab & Abihu; Eli and Hophni & Pinhehas and Samuel

Prophets

Elijah and Elisha

Kings/Leaders

Moses and Joshua; Samuel and Joel & Abijah and Saul; Saul and David; David and Solomon; Solomon and Rehoboam & Jeroboam

Sources

Source 1 - Aaron - Eleazar

Numbers 20: 26 -28

Strip Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar. There Aaron shall be gathered unto the dead. Moses did as G-d had commanded. They ascended Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. Moses stripped Aaron of his vestments and put them on his son Eleazar, and Aaron died there on the summit of the mountain.

Lesson from Aaron to Eleazar

- God commanded Aaron to transfer his priestly garments to Eleazar before his death on Mount Hor. This act symbolized a peaceful and public transition of authority, affirmed by God Himself. The Levites and community witnessed the continuity of priestly ministry, illustrating a Spirit-aligned succession anchored in obedience.

Source 2 - Aaron - Nadab & Abihu

Leviticus 10:1-2

Now Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu each took his fire pan, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before G-d alien fire – which had not been enjoined upon them. And fire came forth from G-d and consumed them; thus they died by G-d's will.

Lesson from Aaron to Nadab and Abihu

- Nadab and Abihu, offered “unauthorized fire” before the Lord and were consumed by divine fire. Their disregard for divine instruction revealed failure in priestly discipline and reverence, demonstrating that sacred office requires obedience, not presumption.

Source 3 - Moses - Joshua

Numbers 27: 15-20 & 22-23

Moses spoke to G-d saying, Let G-d source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community who shall go out before them and come in before them, and who shall take them out and bring them in, so that G-d's community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd. And G-d answered Moses, Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community and commission him in their sight. Invest him with some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite community may obey.

Moses did as G-d commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community. He laid his hands upon him and commissioned him – as G-d had spoken through Moses.

Deuteronomy 31: 7 & 14 & 23

Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel; Be strong and resolute, for it is you who shall go with this people into the land that G-d swore to their fathers to give them, and it is you who shall apportion it to them.

G-d said to Moses: The time is drawing near for you to die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may instruct him. Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting.

And G-d charges Joshua son of Nun: Be strong and resolute; for you shall bring the Israelites into the land that I promised them on oath, and I will be with you.

Deuteronomy 34:9

Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the Israelites heeded him, doing as G-d had commanded Moses.

Exodus 17:9-10

Moses said to Joshua, Pick some troops for us and go out and do battle with Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill, with the rod of G-d in my hand. Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

Lesson from Moses to Joshua

- **Mentorship:** Joshua was Moses's aide for decades, learning leadership through proximity and service.
- **Clear Transfer:** Moses publicly laid his hands on Joshua, conferring authority upon him in a formal ceremony. Moses showed his selfless generosity by laying both hands on Joshua, conferring authority upon him in a formal ceremony going beyond God's command for one.
- **Established Credibility:** Joshua had already proven his military skill and his unwavering faith, earning him the people's respect. Moses initiates succession planning and prays for a successor.
- **Divine choice** is explicit and prior to human endorsement. God chose Joshua directly in response to Moses's prayer.

Source 3 - Eli - Hophni & Phinehas - Samuel

1 Samuel 2: 12 & 17

Now Eli's sons were scoundrels; they paid no heed to G-d. ... The sin of the young men against G-d was very great, for those men treated G-d's offerings impiously.

1 Samuel 2:21

Young Samuel meanwhile grew up in the service of G-d.

1 Samuel 2:22

Now Eli was very old. When he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel and how they lay with the women who performed tasks at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, he said to them, Why do you do such things? I get evil reports about you from the people on all hands. ... If someone sins against another person, G-d may grant a pardon; but if someone offends against G-d, who can obtain a pardon? But they ignored their father's plea; for G-d was resolved that they should die.

1 Samuel 2:26

Young Samuel, meanwhile, grew in esteem and favor both with G-d and with other people.

1 Samuel 2:29-35

You have honored your sons more than Me, feeding on the first portions of every offering of My people Israel. Assuredly declares the Eternal, the G-d of Israel – I intended for you [Eli] and your father's house to remain in My service forever. But now – declares G-d – far be it from Me! For I honor those who honor Me, but those who spurn Me shall be dishonored. A time is coming when I will break your power and that of your father's house, and there shall be no elder in your house. ... And this shall be a sign for you: the fate

of your two sons Hophni and Phinehas – they shall both die on the same day. And I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who will act in accordance with My wishes and My purposes. I will build for him an enduring house, and he shall walk before My anointed evermore.

1 Samuel 3:1-21

Young Samuel was in the service of G-d under Eli. In those days the word of G-d was rare; prophecy was not widespread. One day, Eli was asleep in his usual place; his eyes had begun to fail and he could barely see. The lamp of G-d had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of G-d where the Ark of G-d was. G-d called out to Samuel, and he answered, "I'm coming."

He ran to Eli and said, Here I am; you called me. But he replied, I didn't call you; go back to sleep. So he went back and lay down. Again G-d called, Samuel! Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, Here I am; you called me. But he replied, I didn't call, my son, go back to sleep.

Now Samuel had not yet experienced G-d; the word of G-d had not yet been revealed to him. G-d called Samuel again, a third time, and he rose and went to Eli and said, Here I am; you called me. Then Eli understood that G-d was calling the boy. And Eli Said to Samuel, Go lie down. If you are called again, say Speak G-d, for your servant is listening. And Samuel went to his place and lay down.

G-d started communicating, calling as before: Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel answered, Speak, for your servant is listening. G-d said to Samuel: I am going to do in Israel such a thing that both ears of anyone who hears about it will tingle. In that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I spoke concerning his house, from beginning to end.

And I declare to him that I sentence his house to endless punishment for the iniquity he knew about – how his sons committed sacrilege at will – and he did not rebuke them. Assuredly, I swear concerning the house of Eli that the iniquity of the house of Eli will never be expiated by sacrifice or offering.

Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the House of G-d, Samuel was afraid to report the vision to Eli. But Eli summoned Samuel and said, Samuel, my son; and he answered, Here. And Eli asked, What did G-d say to you? Keep nothing from me. Thus and more may G-d do to you if you keep from me a single word of all that was said to you.

Samuel then told him everything, withholding nothing from him. And Eli said, G-d will always do what is right. Samuel grew up and G-d was with him – not leaving any of his predictions unfulfilled

All Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was trustworthy as a prophet of G-d. And G-d continued to appear at Shiloh – G-d being revealed to Samuel at Shiloh with the word of G-d.

1 Samuel 4:11

The Ark of G-d was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

1 Samuel 4:17-18

The bearer of the news replied, Israel fled before the Philistines, and the troops also suffered a great slaughter. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead and the Ark of G=d has been captured. When he mentioned the Ark of G-d, Eli fell backwards off the seat beside the gate, broke his neck and died; for the man was old and heavy. He had been a chieftain of Israel for forty years.

Lesson from Eli to Hophni & Phinehas

- Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's sons, inherited priestly authority without divine approval. They abused offerings and violated their duties, bringing judgment on their household. The failure stemmed from moral corruption, lack of divine sanction, and people's rejection.

- Their only “source” of authority is heredity; there is no divine call and they “knew not G-d”
- They use coercion and sexual exploitation, modeling demonic, not covenantal, leadership.
- No public, legitimate transfer of power; sons effectively usurp authority.
- Popular rejection—“all the people” report their sins—precedes divine judgment
- Hophni and Phinehas were corrupt, lacked divine favor, and failed in moral responsibility, leading to God’s judgment

Lesson from Eli to Samuel

- Service: Samuel served a long apprenticeship in the sanctuary—essentially an apprentice priest—yet his authority comes via prophetic revelation, not heredity.
- Eli recognizes and submits to Samuel’s word, effectively acknowledging him as successor.
- Popular recognition (“all Israel... knew”) precedes his later judicial and leadership roles.
- Prophetic confirmation plus communal recognition anchored his legitimacy.

Source 4 - Elijah - Elisha

1 Kings 19:16 & 19 & 21

G-d said to Elijah ... anoint Elisha, son of Sheaphat of Abel-meholah to succeed you as prophet. ... Elijah set out from there and came upon Elisha son of Shaphat as he was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah came over to him and threw his mantle over him. ... He turned back from him and took the yoke of oxen and slaughtered them; he boiled their meat with the gear of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and became his attendant.

2 Kings 2:1-4

When G-d was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha had set out from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, Stay here, for G-d has sent me on to Bethel. As G-d lives and as you live, said Elisha, I will not leave you. So they went down to Bethel.

2 Kings 2:9 – 15

As they were crossing, Elijah said to Elisha, Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you? Elisha answered, Let a double portion of your spirit pass on to me. You have asked a difficult thing, he said. If you see me as I am being taken from you, this will be granted to you; if not, it will not.

As they kept on walking and talking, a fiery chariot with fiery horses suddenly appeared and separated one from the other; and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw it, and he cried out, Oh father, father! Israel’s chariots and riders. When he could no longer see him, he grasped his garments and rent them in two. He picked up Elijah’s mantle, which had dropped from him; and he went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Taking the mantle that had dropped from Elijah, he struck the water and said, Where is the Eternal, the G-d of Elijah? As he too struck the water, it parted to the right and to the left, and Elisha crossed over.

When the disciples of the prophets at Jerico saw him from a distance, they exclaimed, The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha! And they went to meet him and bowed low before him to the ground.

Lesson from Elijah to Elisha

- God identifies the successor; Elijah’s “anointing” and casting of the mantle enacts it
- Elisha’s request for a “double portion” echoes the firstborn’s inheritance right; he asks to be recognized as Elijah’s true heir
- Mentorship: Elisha faithfully served Elijah for years, an act symbolized by his refusal to leave his master’s side Long period of servanthood and mentorship — estimated up to 20+ years — forms Elisha’s leadership
- Clear divine designation: G-d explicitly named Elisha “prophet in your place.”

- Clear Transfer: The passing of Elijah's mantle and Elisha's subsequent parting of the Jordan River served as a powerful public sign that the spirit of leadership had been transferred.
- Popular Recognition: The other prophets immediately recognized the transition, saying, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha" the "sons of the prophets."

Source 5 - Samuel - Joel & Abijah

1 Samuel 8:1-8

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons judges over Israel. The name of his first born was Joel and his second son's name was Abijah; they sat as judges in Beer-sheba. But his sons did not follow in his ways; they were bent on gain, they accepted bribes, and they subverted justice.

All the elders of Israel assembled and came to Samuel at Ramah and they said to him, You have grown old, and your sons have not followed your ways. Therefore appoint a king for us, to govern us like all other nations. Samuel was displeased that they said, Give us a king to govern us. Samuel prayed to G-d and G-d replied to Samuel, Heed the demand of the people in everything they say to you. For it is not you that they have rejected; it is me they have rejected to rule over them.

Lesson from Samuel to Joel & Abijah

- When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons, Joel and Abijah, as Israel's leaders/judges. However, like Eli's sons before them, they were corrupt and used their position for personal enrichment.
- Lack of Character: "They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice". They did not follow their father's example of integrity.
- Popular Rejection: The elders of Israel explicitly rejected their leadership, using their corruption as the reason for demanding a king. This failed succession directly led to the establishment of the monarchy.

Source 6 - Samuel - Saul

1 Samuel:9-15-17

Now the day before Saul came, G-d had revealed the following to Samuel: At this time tomorrow, I will send a man to you from the territory of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him ruler of my people Israel. He will deliver my people from the hands of the Philistines; for I have taken note of my people, their outcry has come to me.

As soon as Samuel saw Saul, G-d declared to him, This is the man that I told you would govern my people.

1 Samuel 9: 22-24

Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and gave them a place at the head of the guests, who numbered about thirty.

1 Samuel 10:1

Samuel took a flask of oil and poured some on Saul's head and kissed him, and said G-d herewith anoints you ruler over this people – G-d's own.

1 Samuel 10:6-7

Samuel said to Saul – The spirit of G-d will grip you, and you will speak in ecstasy along with them; you will become a different person. And once these signs have happened to you, act when the occasion arises, for G-d is with you.

1 Samuel 10: 9 -13

As Saul turned around to leave Samuel, G-d gave him another heart; and all those signs were fulfilled that same day. And when they came there, to the Hill, he saw a band of prophets coming toward him. Thereupon the spirit of G-d gripped him and he spoke in ecstasy among them.

When all who knew him previously saw him speaking in ecstasy together with the prophets, the people said to one another, What's happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul too among the prophets? ... And when he stopped speaking in ecstasy, he entered the shrine.

1 Samuel 10:17-19

Samuel summoned the people to G-d at Mizpah and said to them ... But today you have rejected your G-d who delivered you from all your troubles and calamities. For you said, Now set up a king over us! Now station yourselves before G-d by your tribes and clans.

1 Samuel 10:24 & 26

And Samuel said to the people, Do you see the one whom G-d has chosen? There is none like him among all the people. And all the people acclaimed him, shouting, Long live the king.

... Saul also went home to Gibeah, accompanied by upstanding men whose hearts G-d had touched.

1 Samuel 15:24 & 26 & 28

Saul said to Samuel, I did wrong to transgress G-d's command and your instruction; but I was afraid of the troops and I yielded to them.

But Samuel said to Saul, I will not go back with you; for you have rejected G-d's command, and G-d has rejected you as king over Israel.

And Samuel said to him, G-d has this day torn the kingship over Israel away from you and has given it to another who is worthier than you.

1 Samuel 15:35-36

Samuel never saw Saul again to the day of his death. But Samuel grieved over Saul, because G-d regretted having made Saul king over Israel. And G-d said to Samuel, How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and set out. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have decided on one of his sons to be king.

Lesson from Samuel to Saul

- Started right but ended bad.

Source 7 - Saul - David

1 Samuel 16:10 & 12-13

Thus Jesse presented seven of his sons before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, G-d has not chosen any of these.

So they sent and brought him (David). He was ruddy cheeked, bright eyed, and handsome. And G-d said, Rise and anoint him, for this is the one. Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of G-d gripped David from that day on.

1 Samuel 16:14

Now the spirit of G-d had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from G-d began to terrify him.

1 Samuel 18:2, 5, 12-16

Saul took him (David) into his service that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

David went out with the troops and he was successful in every mission on which Saul sent him, and Saul put him in command of all the soldiers; this pleased all the troops and Saul's courtiers as well.

Saul was afraid of David, for G-d was with him and had turned away from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him chief of a thousand, to march at the head of the troops. David was successful in all his undertakings, for G-d was with him and when Saul saw that he was successful, he dreaded him. All Israel and Judah loved David, for he marched at their head.

1 Samuel 24:21

I (Saul) know now that you (David) will become king and that the kingship over Israel will remain in your hands.

1 Samuel 30:7-8

David said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, Bring the ephod up to me. When Abiathar brought up the ephod to David, David inquired of G-d, Shall I pursue those raiders? Will I overtake them? The reply came, Pursue, for you shall overtake and you shall rescue.

Lesson from Saul to David

- Though Saul's reign began under divine blessing, his disobedience led to rejection. Saul failed to prepare a successor and opposed God's chosen replacement, David. Misalignment with God's will and self-reliance caused turbulent transition, contrasting sharply with the harmony seen in David-Solomon succession

Source 8 - David - Solomon

1 Chronicles 22:5-7

For David thought, My son Solomon is an untried youth, and the House to be built for G-d is to be made exceedingly great to win fame and glory throughout all the lands; let me then lay aside material for him. So David laid aside much material before he died. Then he summoned his son Solomon and charged him with building the House for the eternal G-d of Israel.

1 Chronicles 22:17

David charged all the officers of Israel to support his son Solomon.

1 Chronicles 23:1

When David reached a ripe old age, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.

1 Chronicles 28:4-6

The eternal G-d of Israel chose me (David) of all my father's house to be king over Israel forever. For G-d chose Judah to be ruler, and of the family of Judah, my father's house; and of my father's sons, I was the preferred choice to be crowned king over all Israel. And of all of my sons – for many are the sons G-d gave me – my son Solomon was chosen to sit on the throne of the Kingdom of G-d over Israel. I was told, It will be your son Solomon who will build my House and my courts, for I have chosen him to be a son to me and I will be a father to him.

1 Chronicles 29:22 -25

They (officers of the clans and the officers of the tribes of Israel) ate and drank in G-d's presence on that day with great joy. They again proclaimed Solomon son of David king, and they anointed him as ruler before G-d and Zadok as High Priest. Solomon successfully took over the throne of G-d as king instead of his father David, and all went well with him. All Israel accepted him; all the officers and warriors, and the sons of King David as well, gave their hand in support of King Solomon. G-d made Solomon exceedingly great in the eyes of all Israel, and endowed him with a regal majesty that no king of Israel before him ever had.

1 Kings 1: 29-30

And the king (David) took an oath saying, As G-d lives, who has rescued me from every trouble: The oath I swore to you (Batheheba) by the eternal the G-d of Israel, that your son Solomon should succeed me as king and that he should sit upon my throne in my stead, I will fulfill this very day.

1 Kings 1:38-39

Then the priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan and Benaiah son of Jehoiada went down with the Cherethites and the Pelethites. They had Solomon ride on King David's mule and they led him to Gihon. The priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the Tent and anointed Solomon. They sounded the horn and all the people shouted, Long live King Solomon.

1 Kings 1:46-47

Further Solomon seated himself on the royal throne. Further, the king's courtiers came to congratulate our lord King David saying, May G-d make the renown of Solomon even greater than yours, and may his throne be exalted even higher than yours. And the king bowed low on his couch.

1 Kings 3:5-14

At Gibeon G-d appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and G-d said, Ask what shall I grant you? Solomon said, You dealt most graciously with your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness and righteousness and in integrity of heart. You have continued this great kindness to him by giving him a son to occupy his throne, as is now the case. And now, my eternal G-d, you have made your servant king in place of my father David; but I am a young lad, with no experience in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of the people you have chosen, a people too numerous to be numbered or counted. Grant, then, your servant an understanding mind to judge your people, to distinguish between good and bad; for who can judge this vast people of yours. Please that Solomon had asked for this, G-d said to him, Because you asked for this – you did not ask for long life, you did not ask for riches, you did not ask for the life of your enemies, but you asked for discernment in dispensing justice – I now do as you have spoken. I grant you a wise and discerning mind; there has never been anyone like you before, nor will anyone like you arise again. And I also grant you what you did not ask for – both riches and glory all your life – the like of which no king has ever had. And I will further grant you long life, if you will walk in my ways and observe my laws and commandments, as did your father David.

Lesson from David to Solomon

- Like Moshe, David is disqualified from completing the core project (building the Mikdash) and passes it to his successor.
- There is both private charge and public installation, paralleling Moshe–Yehoshua
- Shlomo asks for and receives a new kind of charisma – a understanding heart to judge the people.
- Founder accepts limits; successor is commissioned for the next stage.
- Succession anchored in divine decree (“a son shall be born to you... Solomon
- Public consent and divine magnification of the new king: “all Israel” accepts Shlomo

Source 9 - Solomon - Rehoboam & Jeroboam

1 Kings 12:1 & 6-9

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to acclaim him as king.

King Rehoboam took counsel with the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. He said, What answer do you advise me to give to his people. They answered him, If you will be a servant to those people today and serve them, and if you respond to them with kind words, they will be your servants always. But he ignored the advice that the elders gave him, and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.

1 Kings 12:13-16

The king answered the people harshly, ignoring the advice that the elders had given him. He spoke to them in accordance with the advice of the young men, and said, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father flogged you with whips, but I will flog you with scorpions. The king did not listen to the people; for G-d had brought it about in order to fulfill the promise that G-d had made through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people answered the king: We have no portion in David, No share in Jesse's song. To your tents, O Israel. Now look to your own House, O David. So the Israelites returned to their homes.

Jeroboam

1 Kings 14:6-10

Prophet Ahijah to the wife of Jeroboam – Go tell Jeroboam: Thus said the Eternal, the G-d of Israel: I raised you up from among the people and made you a ruler over my people Israel. I tore away the kingdom from the House of David and gave it to you. But you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my sight.

You have acted worse than all those who preceded you; you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke my anger; and me you have cast behind your back. Therefore I will bring disaster upon the House of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, bond, and free in Israel. I will sweep away the House of Jeroboam utterly, as dung is swept away.

Lesson from Solomon to Rehoboam & Jeroboam

- Reh'av'am treats kingship as automatic hereditary right and rejects servant-leadership language ("be a servant unto this people"). Reliance on "position power" instead of "personal power" validated by God and people.
- No prayer for divine confirmation, no prophetic anointing scene, and no attempt to secure the people's willing allegiance before imposing policy.
- Ignoring wise elder counsel that emphasizes service; choosing peers who urge dominance. His inability to listen to experienced leaders led to a disastrous decision.
- People effectively veto his kingship by seceding; "he cannot reign if there is no realm." His arrogance immediately caused the ten northern tribes to rebel, permanently splitting the kingdom. He failed to understand the people he was meant to lead.
- Lack of a Servant's Heart: Rehoboam chose to exert power rather than serve the people's needs.
- Result: permanent division of the kingdom – model of "how not to do succession
- **Good start - bad finish.** Jeroboam began his rule with massive popular support and a divine mandate to break away from the oppressive taxes of King Solomon's son,

Rehoboam, his legacy was entirely **undone by his religious and political decisions**. He worried that if his subjects continued traveling south to Jerusalem to worship at Solomon's Temple, their loyalties would shift back to the Davidic line. So he instituted the Golden Calves as alternative centers in Dan and Bethel. He democratized the Priesthood by rejecting traditional Levites and appoints non-levite priests. He altered the calendar.

- **Rejected advise of prophet Ahijah** (1 Kings 14) which caused death of his heir Abijah and violent coup by son Nadab (but who was assassinated by Baasha which started a pattern of violent coups. Later rulers were sometimes identified as walking "in the sins of Jeroboam").

Successful Succession

Moshe-Joshua; David-Shlomo; Elijah-Elisha; Eli-Samuel

- **Divine Approval:** The successor is God's choice, not merely a product of human ambition or heredity. Their authority comes from a divine calling.
- **A Clear Transfer of Power with communal recognition:** The transition is made public and official. The predecessor actively commissions the successor, leaving no doubt about who is in charge. Moses' public commissioning of Joshua and David's open anointing of Solomon validated successors before their communities, minimizing confusion. Outgoing leader participate in transferring their mantle.
- **Mentorship & Service:** The successor has spent significant time learning from and serving the predecessor, developing not just skills but a servant's heart. Future leaders like Joshua and Elisha spent years serving under their mentors, learning humility and spiritual discernment before assuming leadership
- **Established Credibility:** The new leader has earned the trust and recognition of the people through their character and past actions.
- **Faithfulness to God's Covenant:** The leader's primary commitment is to uphold God's laws and lead the people in righteousness, not toward their own agenda.
- **Personal Character:** The leader demonstrates emunah, humility, courage, integrity, and selflessness, putting the needs of the people and the will of God before their own. Moral Integrity and Obedience – Failures like Eli's sons reveal that divine favor depends on righteousness, not heredity or status.
- **Continuity with adaptation** - Successors sustain and continue the divine mission rather than personal prestige but adjust style (e.g., Yehoshua more empathetic; Shlomo's wisdom focus).

Unsuccessful Succession

Rehoboam & Jeroboam, Nadab & Abihu, Hophni & Phinehas, Joel & Abijah

- **Presumption of hereditary right** without fresh divine or communal validation.
- **Abuse of power and privilege**—coercion, exploitation, ignoring covenant obligations
- **Out-of-touch leadership** that refuses to “be a servant to this people”
- **Failure of discipline and mentoring** by the outgoing leader (Eli's indulgence; David's mixed signals vs. careful preparation for Shlomo).
- **Popular rejection** leading to schism or disgrace.

Things to remember

- **God's Sovereignty is Central:** A successful transition begins with seeking and submitting to God's choice.
- **Character is the Foundation:** A leader's integrity, humility, and faithfulness to God are more important than their lineage or charisma.
- **Service is the Training Ground:** The best leaders are often those who have spent years in faithful, humble service. Mentorship is not a short-term program but a long-term relationship.
- **Clarity is Crucial:** A clear, public transfer of authority builds confidence and prevents confusion and division.

Things we might be able to do to improve the odds

- How can we imitate Moshe's prayer in Numbers 27:16 that G-d appoint a leader over the community. Moshe's only consideration was who was going to succeed him and he went about ensuring that the mantle of leadership will be passed over from him to his successor during his lifetime.
- What rituals or public acts can function like laying on hands or passing a mantle to signal continuity to the community?
- How do we cultivate long-term "servant apprenticeship" (as with Joshua, Elisha, Samuel) instead of rapid promotion?
- How can we reduce the risk reliance on family names, entitlement, or failure to restrain misconduct?
- How can prophetic voices—inside and outside formal structures—help correct succession failures, as in the prophetic critiques of priests and kings?

Overall conclusion

A pattern emerges in which succession is most successful when God's choice is sought and recognized, the outgoing leader publicly empowers the successor, and the successor demonstrates servant-hearted faithfulness and credibility over time.

Unsuccessful successions tend to rely on heredity or power alone, ignore divine and communal confirmation, and tolerate corruption in the successor